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April 11, 2006 LB 489

SENATOR CUDABACK: AM2941 and AM2981, both?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Both of them.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Both are withdrawn. Mr. Clerk, please.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next amendment I have, Senator Cunningham, AM3091. (Legislative Journal page 1484.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Cunningham.

SENATOR CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members. Colleagues, as you recall, on General File we had AM2948 that was negotiated to prevent balance billing to employees in work comp cases. I told you at that time that there were problems. Even though it was negotiated, many people had some major problems with it. Since that time, we did get a \$3 million A bill from DAS, and I couldn't live with that, as I'm sure most of you couldn't. At that time, I didn't quite know what to do. I got Senator Landis to come and help us negotiate, and quite frankly, I'm very grateful to Senator Landis. He did a wonderful, wonderful job and I couldn't have done it without him, so Senator, I'm telling you that right now. But the negotiation was done, approved by all parties, the payers and the providers. It will remove the language that was in the...that we had in the amendment that you passed on General File. That's the language that you've gotten all of the letters on. It will remove that language. And what it does, it encourages informal dispute resolution for billing disputes when the parties...and when the parties agree. And if the parties do agree, they have two options: one, submit informal dispute resolution mediation, and if there is no settlement, then the parties further agree to binding arbitration; or the parties may agree to go straight to binding arbitration and forget the mediation. And that's basically the gist of it. It does protect the employee from balance billing. The providers have all said that they will not balance...or, pardon me, not the providers. The...what's my word...the hospitals and docs, they will not balance bill employees. And that's the number one thing that we were after. And Senator Landis, I'll give you a